

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 061432Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2358

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T VIENNA 3095

EXDIS/NORFORN

FROM US REP MBFR

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET REP APRIL 4, 1974

REF: VIENNA 3094

1. IN ADDITION TO POINTS MADE BY KHLESTOV AND REPORTED TO AD HOC GROUP IN REFTEL, KHLESTOV MADE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL POINTS TO US REP DURING APRIL 4 DISCUSSION:

A. KHLESTOV ASKED US REP WHAT LATTER THOUGHT OF KHLESTOV'S SUGGESTION IN APRIL 1 INFORMAL SESSION THAT PARTICIPANTS CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT TO "POSTPONE" NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS. KHLESTOV SAID HE WANTED TO KNOW US REP'S ATTITUDE TO THIS IDEA PRIOR TO RECESS SO HE COULD DISCUSS IT FURTHER IN MOSCOW DURING RECESS. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT HE SAID TO GAIN AGREEMENT ON THIS CONCEPT BECAUSE THE POLES AND THE CZECHS KEPT PRESSING TO INCLUDE NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS, BUT IT MIGHT NONETHELESS BE A POSSIBILITY. US REP SAID HE THOUGHT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD STICK TO AGREED IDEA OF GIVING PRIORITY ATTENTION TO RESOLVING THE QUESTION OF WHOSE FORCES SHOULD BE REDUCED FROM THE OUTSET.

B. KHLESTOV ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS REALLY NO CHANCE WHATEVER TO GET EUROPEANS IN. US REP SAID THIS WAS NOT A PRACTICAL POSSIBILITY. THE REASONS HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE CLEAR. AMONG THEM WAS THE FACT THAT ANY EUROPEAN REDUCTION WOULD RESULT

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IN CEILINGS.

C. KHLESTOV SAID IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO GET RID OF THE CEILINGS SO THAT THIS SHOULD BE NO OBSTACLE. US REP REPEATED THAT THERE WAS NO PRACTICAL WAY TO BRING EUROPEANS IN ON A FIRST PHASE REDUCTION. THE BEST WAY TO MAKE PROGRESS WAS TO CONCENTRATE ON PHASING. WEST HAD ALREADY GIVEN CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF SATISFACTION ON THIS POINT. IF SOVIETS THOUGHT INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS HAD NOT RECEIVED SUFFICIENT ATTENTION, THEY SHOULD SO INDICATE.

D. KHLESTOV SAID US AND USSR WERE THE ONLY PARTICIPANTS WHO REALLY WANTED AGREEMENT IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. THE WESTERN EUROPEANS CERTAINLY DID NOT. US AND USSR SHOULD MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO LOOK FOR COMPROMISE. HE SAID THE SOVIETS REALLY WANTED SOME MOVEMENT IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. KHLESTOV SUGGESTED THAT THERE BE BILATERAL CONTACTS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS PRIOR TO RESUMPTION OF TALKS IN MAY TO WORK OUT SOME SPECIFIC STEPS FORWARD PRIOR TO RESUMPTION ON WEEK OF MAY 6. US REP SAID HE WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET WITH KNLESTOF BILATERALLY DIRECTLY AFTER RESUMPTION TO EXCHANGE IMPRESSIONS.

E. KHLESTOV COMMENTED IN PASSING THAT, AS FAR AS HE HAD BEEN INFORMED, RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN MOSCOW OF MBFR WITH SECSTATE HAD NOT BEEN VERY INTENSIVE. HE ASKED WHETHER US REP HAD "ANY HINTS" HE COULD MKAE AS TO WHICH DIRECTION THINGS COULD TAKE IN ORDER TO BRING SOME MOVEMENT INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS. US REP SAID HE HAD ALREADY INDICATED HOW HE THOUGHT PROGRESS COULD BE MADE.

2. COMMENT: KHLESTOV WAS NOT SPECIFIC IN HIS REFERENCE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF "POSTPONING" NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS. WE DID NOT WISH TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS POINT BY ASKING HIM QUESTIONS ON IT. ALTHOUGH THE EVIDENCE IS INADEQUATE TO REACH ANY FIRM CONCLUSION, HE SEEMED TO HAVE IN MIND A UNILATERAL COMMITMENT OR COMMITMENTS TO REDUCE NUCLEAR FORCES AT A LATER TIME WHICH BY INFERENCE AT LEAST WOULD INPLY A NUCLEAR FREEZE IN THE INTERIM. END COMMENT. HUMES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS, BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, EAST WEST MEETINGS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEPLOYMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974VIENNA03095
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740078-1042
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740460/aaaacdcz.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: VIENNA 3094
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAR 2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <06 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR: CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET REP APRIL 4, 1974
TAGS: PARM, UR, US, XG, NATO
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005